



Hotel Safety Tips For Travelers

Before your trip

Copy all credit cards, airline tickets, passports and important documents, front and back.

Jewelry and luggage and all valuables should be photographed prior to trip.

What to look for in a safe hotel:

If possible, select a hotel with has installed modern electronic guest room locks. The majority of these locks automatically change the lock combination with every new guest so there is little chance of someone having a duplicate key to your room. If you lose or misplace your key, ask to have your room re-keyed immediately.

Is each room equipped with a dead bolt lock and a peephole?

Fire sprinklers in hotel rooms, hallways, and meeting rooms likewise for smoke detectors. If each room is not equipped with a smoke detector, are sprinklers systems installed in the hallways or is your only hope the local fire department.

Each room telephone should allow outside dialing.

Guest phones located in hallways and lobbies should not allow direct room dialing. Anyone using the phone should have to call the operator and

request a room by guest name, not room number.

Secure locks on windows and adjoining doors.

Well-lit interior hallways, parking structures and grounds.

Hotels that have limited access to hotel structure, generally the more limited the access; the less likely a trespasser will enter.

The parking garage should not have elevators taking passengers to guest floors. It should only go to the lobby.

Does hotel provide personnel trained in guest security and available for escorts to rooms and auto when requested?

Is the hotel located in a high crime rate area, especially when traveling overseas? Check with the US Embassy's Resident Security Officer in that country and they can alert you of areas to stay away from.

When arriving and checking into your hotel room

If you arrive in a bus or cab, stay with your luggage until it is brought into the hotel lobby.

Keep a close eye on your luggage, purse, etc when checking in.

If the lobby is busy, thieves will often take advantage of the distractions to take your things with them.

If you are staying in an older room which still has the older guest door locks with metal key, one of first signs of how a hotel treats the issue of security is to observe how hotel room keys are controlled. If it is checkout time and a pile of metal room keys are laying on the front desk, the hotel is not too concerned about your security. Anyone can take a key laying on the desk. This is not a big concern if the hotel is using electronic key cards but is if the metal keys have the room number embossed on it. You will find this more prevalent overseas.

Ask the front desk personnel not to announce your room number. Rather, tell them to write it down or point to it. If the desk clerk should do this, explain the

problem and asked to be given another room. You never know who is listening. Your room number is a matter of security, and the fewer people that know your whereabouts, the better. There's no need to announce it to the entire hotel lobby.

When registering, sign only your last name and first initial. Don't use titles or degrees. Makes it harder to determine gender, marital status or profession. If you are a women traveling alone, you might consider booking your room as Mr. and Mrs.

Don't leave your credit card lying on the check-in counter while you complete your registration. Also make sure the credit card that is handed back to you by the hotel clerk is really yours.

Instruct the desk not to give out your name and room number and ask for them to call you if someone inquires about you.

Immediately upon check in, get two business cards or matchbooks with the hotel name and address on them. Place one by the phone in the room so you know where you are and keep the other on you when you leave so you know where to come back to. If you get lost, you have the address and phone number handy. There is nothing more frustrating than telling a cab driver to take you to the "Marriott" and they ask which one?? That could be one very expensive cab ride. Or if you are in a country where you don't speak the language, you can simply show a taxi driver the matchbook, and you're on your way back to the hotel.

Room Selection

Maximize safety and security. Select a room located between the 4 and 6th floor Avoid rooms above the sixth floor--the maximum height that fire-department ladders can reach. For some fire departments overseas, and within the United States, they do not have equipment to reach hotel floors above the 6th floor

Whenever possible do not except a hotel on the ground floor that has doors and windows that open to the outside. Hotels with interior hallways tend to be generally safer. For security in motels, avoid ground floor rooms off the parking lot. If you can't get a room on a higher level, take one facing the interior courtyard.

Guestrooms that are as close to the elevators as possible are safest, but tend to be noisier. You might also want to find out if the room is located next to a vending area, those also tend to be noisy.

Elevator safety

Women should be accompanied to hotel room and room should be checked

Observe all passengers in elevators

It is wise to board last and select floor buttons last

If possible position yourself near the elevator control panel and if attacked, push as many floor buttons as possible. Keep your back to the sidewall.

If someone suspicious boards an elevator, exit as soon as possible.

When checking into your hotel room

After checking into a room, examine the following:

Examine the guest room lock and be sure it is functioning properly.

The closets and bathrooms are checked to make sure no one is hiding.

All windows and outside doors are checked to insure they lock and operate properly

The lock on the adjoining door is checked to insure it is locked and works

The telephone is checked and you know how to make a outside call

Look for information in room about fire safety and read to become familiar with nearest fire exit / stairway. Locate nearest fire exit. Find one at each end of the hallway. How many doors away? Does the door open easily? Are the exit signs illuminated? If the lights are out, be helpful and contact the front desk to let them know. Is the stairwell clear of debris? Make a note on the back of the business card that you place by your bed noting the number of doors away to the emergency exit, in each direction, and the location of the fire extinguisher and fire pull box.

When you enter your hotel room, make sure the door closes securely and that the deadbolt works. Keep the deadbolt and safety bar on at all time. It cannot be stressed enough that you should never prop your hotel room door open. Anyone could walk in.

Place your room key in the same place every time, preferably close to the bed.

If you have to leave the room in a hurry due to an emergency, you won't have time to be searching for your key. Also, you'll need the key to get back into the room.

When inside a hotel room, for whatever length of time always use the deadbolt. If the room does not a dead bolt or heavy-duty security clasp but has a chain, twist it to take up the slack before latching it.

The door to your room must never be opened by anyone unless the guest is absolutely known.

If you receive a phone call to your room and the person states they are with the hotel and need to come to your room and repair something, use caution. Always get the employees name and call the front desk to verify that it was a legitimate employee who called you and they do in fact need to come to your room. Some criminals are known to where hotel uniforms or pose a plainclothes security. The best bet is to be your own security guard. No matter how effective hotel security is, it can't think of everything.

If you want to test the hotel, call the switchboard from a house phone and ask for yourself. Tell the operator you are not sure of the room number. If the answer is, "She's in room 203," this is not a good sign. The correct answer is, "I'll connect you." Good security requires that the hotel switchboard not give out room numbers and the best hotels strictly adhere to this policy.

When inside your room, use a door swedge when sleeping or in the shower. This may seem a little overkill but overseas, hotel burglars have been know to frequent hotels that use standard metal room keys that are easy to obtain. Unfortunately many hotels do not change the locks to the doors when the keys are lost, the criminals know that many of the hotel rooms might contain valuables of the presumed wealthy western traveler from the United States. Some of the crooks are very bold. They have been know to listen to the room door to see if you are in the shower. If you are they enter your room with the spare key (because no secondary door lock) and

removes your wallet, purse, or laptop. If someone else is in the room the crook is in a suit and says "sorry, the front desk gave me this key." By employing a door swedge will keep out these sly crooks and will could an alarm if attempted. See our products page for one of these devices.

Never leave your key in the lock inside your room (some hotels in third world countries still have these). they can be pushed out from the other side with a pin. The crooks simply slides a piece of newspaper under the door, the key drops on the paper and the crook slide the paper and the key back under the door.

Place that all-important flashlight next to your bed.

It's much too dangerous to be stumbling around in a dark hotel in the middle of the night if the electricity goes out. Also, if you have to evacuate in the event of a fire, the flashlight will help guide you down a smoke filled hallway.

Remember, if there is a fire or other such emergency, you are pretty much on your own to evacuate yourself, especially at night. What you learn in the few minutes it takes you to orient yourself to your room and the surrounding areas could mean the difference between life and death

If you loose your key, ask for a new room or have the lock or electronic key card changed.

When you leave your hotel room for the day or evening

When you leave your room, always leave the television on.

Ask maid to make your room up during breakfast. Place "Do not disturb" sign on door. If you want maid service, call to housekeeping and tell them to make up the room but leave the sign on the door. The sign is valuable when you aren't in the room because it gives the impression you are still inside.

At night, leave a light on and drapes should be partially opened as if someone was inside.

Always use the security vault in hotel. The in-room safe is adequate sometimes. The ones least recommended are those that take standard keys (usually overseas). Preferred are those that have an electronic combination lock. The front desk deposit boxes are usually safer but more inconvenient.

Don't display your guest room key in public or even inside the hotel or at the swimming pool. Crooks have known to walk by casually, observe the number in the key if stamped on it and make false charges in the hotel restaurant, bar or store and using your room number.

What to take with you when leaving your hotel room

Take a minimum of cash, and only enough travelers checks for that outing.

Carry "bait money" for potential thieves.

Wear minimum jewelry, especially women. Women, wear only a simple wedding band in lieu of a diamond ring. Remember in some foreign cities and even some area within the United States, a diamond ring might be worth what a criminal might earn in a year. Remove the temptation!

Keep credit cards and t/checks in separate pockets.

Laptop safety while staying in a hotel room

Laptop computers or other expensive items can be easily stolen from hotel rooms. The only way to protect them is to leave them at the front desk in a safety deposit box or to secure them in your room. If you want to take the easy way by leaving them in your room (most of us do) use a security cable to a fixed object in the hotel. I always attach my laptop to the pipe under the sink in the bathroom when my laptop is left in the hotel room for several hours. Think about it. Would you leave your wallet or purse sitting on the table in the middle of your room? Usually not, but you would leave a \$3,500 laptop sitting there! Which is more valuable?

Hotel parking lots

If you valet park your car at the hotel, and valet driver puts a card on your dash, make sure it does not have your room number, always keep it private.

Always walk in numbers at night, especially in hotel parking lots

Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Crooks know that rental cars contain items of value.

Park as close to an exit as possible.

When approaching a car, always have keys in hand.

Women should keep purses close to their bodies not loose around or dandling off a shoulder. Keep it in front of you with a hand on top of it. Do not feel awkward to ask for an escort to your car. It is recommended to use the valet service at night.

For further information consider our book "[Traveler Beware, An Undercover Cop's Guide To Avoiding Pickpockets, Luggage Theft, and Travel Scams](#)" ISBN No. 0967130204, which can be ordered from our products page. You may also visit our web site which contains over 130 pages of travel safety information.

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